

California Children and Families Commission

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STATE COMMISSION APPROVES A NEARLY \$40 MILLION FUNDING PACKAGE FOR PROP. 10 REVENUE

The Panel Unanimously Approves Statewide Plan to Help California Children and their Families

SANTA ANA, Calif. – The California Children and Families Commission – the state’s lead agency charged with administering Proposition 10 – today approved nearly \$40 million in funding aimed at addressing an array of education, child care and health-related needs for children prenatal to age five. The funding package represents the first in a series of State Commission initiatives supporting comprehensive, broad-based programs benefiting young children throughout California.

Passed by voters in 1998, Prop. 10 placed a 50-cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund early childhood development and anti-tobacco education programs. The State Commission, which was appointed by Governor Davis and top legislators shortly after the measure was enacted, helps oversee implementation of Prop. 10 at the local level and distributes tobacco-tax revenue collected for statewide purposes.

“The effects of this funding are intended to be far-reaching,” said Jane Henderson, executive director of the California Children and Families Commission at its Orange County meeting where the vote was taken. “We identified programs and initiatives throughout the state that could accomplish the most for the greatest number of children and families.”

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The funding initiatives include:

- **\$1 million to expand the toll-free Tobacco Cessation helpline.** Administered by the California Department of Health Services since 1992, the helpline is a one-on-one counseling service in multiple languages for individuals seeking to quit smoking.
- **\$6 million to expand training for child care and child development programs in under-served areas and for under-served populations.** To address the shortage of child care providers, particularly in areas with a low availability of licensed programs, this project will help evaluate existing training programs as well as expand access to and support pre-service child care training programs. A separate initiative will also review the issue of retention of and compensation for child care providers.
- **\$1.1 million to expand the State Library's Families for Literacy Project.** Designed to serve families that are most at-risk for literacy problems, the 11-year statewide program works with local libraries and communities to bolster literacy skills for families with young children.
- **\$2.1 million to fund the State Library's Families for Literacy Mobile Learning Labs.** The mobile vans will provide family literacy assistance to "hard to reach" and under-served families in selected regions. Visiting two communities daily, the vans' professional staff and trained volunteers will deliver books, foster reading skills among parents and their children and assist families in working with and understanding computers.
- **\$5 million to expand the California Reading and Literacy Project to child care providers.** The project will expand this highly successful in-service program for elementary school teachers, providing professional development opportunities for early childhood educators, including training them in literacy and reading readiness techniques for preschool-age children.
- **\$4 million to fund health and family support consultants in the child care system.** In participating counties, child care coordinator and consultant positions will be established to help educate child care providers in public health issues, and to link parents with available programs, such as Healthy Families and other public health resources.
- **\$3 million to fund safety initiatives for child care centers.** The \$3 million will match an item in Governor Davis' proposed budget to provide child care centers and licensed health care providers with training and information to improve emergency preparedness and to address the trauma associated with disasters. The Commission's funds will provide one-time grants of up to \$5,000 for safety enhancements at licensed child care centers and for the development of emergency plans in coordination with local law enforcement.

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- **\$5 million to provide funding incentives for the accreditation of state subsidized child care centers.** This measure would match Governor Davis' \$5 million budget proposal to provide technical assistance to centers that are "feeders" to low-performing schools, so that these centers can obtain accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or equivalent. Accreditation is one important measure of program quality, and quality child care programs are linked to improved student performance.
- **\$3.6 million to develop a statewide infant-family mental health pilot program.** To be administered in four counties, this initiative would benefit up to 3,000 families by providing funding for the added training of professionals to help diagnose early mental health problems in children age three and younger, and to provide effective services to young children and their families.
- **\$2 million to expand a statewide survey on health care needs.** This funding would help supplement information compiled under the California Health Interview Survey, a research project conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles. As a result of Commission funding, the survey – which tracks health statistics throughout California – will incorporate young children into its sampling to provide much needed information on a wide range of child development indicators and parental health knowledge.
- **\$700,000 to complete an analysis of barriers to child care for kids with special needs and make policy recommendations to improve access.** This initiative would complete a comprehensive interagency research study of the barriers to child care for children with special needs. The program will also provide initial technical assistance to county agencies to help promote access to child care.
- **\$6.1 million to fund an asthma control initiative for children, ages zero to five.** This initiative is designed to improve the delivery, quality and coordination of preventive, educational and treatment services offered in community-based settings for children suffering from asthma.

Prop. 10, funded by a 50-cent per pack tax on tobacco, supports early childhood development programs for children prenatal to age five, as well as anti-smoking efforts. Twenty percent of the tax revenues are administered by the state. This initial nearly \$40 million investment by the State Commission will support needed research and fund a variety of programs that directly improve the lives and development of children.

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The remaining 80 percent of the tax revenues are distributed to County Children and Family Commissions statewide based upon county birth data. To date, the state has already transferred \$415 million in Prop. 10 revenues into local trust funds set by County Commissions so that money will be available as local commissions implement their strategic plans. Another \$83 million will be deposited into the local trust funds by the end of January.

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